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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4455
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 7171
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 5402
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0625
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 4818
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 7918
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C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 001177

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PARIS FOR JORDAN; LONDON FOR TSOU; NSX FOR GAVITO;
DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA, NEA/I

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/12/2017

TAGS: PINS PHUM PREL SY

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ASAD DISMISSES TWO CABINET MINISTERS -
TWO NEW MINISTERS APPOINTED

Classified By: Charge D'Affairs Michael H. Corbin for reasons 1.4 b/d

¶11. (C) On December 10, new Ministers of Communications and Technology, Imad Abdul-Ghani Sabouni, and of Awqaf, Islamic Trusts, Mohammed Abdul-Sattar al Sayied, were sworn in before President Asad. This came two days after President Asad removed Dr. Amro Nazir Salem, Minister of Communications and Technology, and Ziad Ayyoubi, Minister of Awqaf, Islamic Trusts, reportedly because of their corruption related ties and activities. Biographic information on the new cabinet members as follows:

Minister of Communications and Technology Dr. Imad Abdul-Ghani Sabouni: Sunni; Born 1964 in Damascus; Ph.D. from Polytechnic National Institute, Grenoble; Director General of Syrian Telecommunications (STE) (2003-2006); Advisor to the Minister of Communications and Technology (2003-2006); Current Chairman of the Syrian Computer Society; married with two daughters.

Minister of Awqaf Dr. Mohammed Abdul-Sattar al Sayied: Sunni; Born 1958 in Tartous; B.A. in Business Administration (1980); Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from Islamis Studies University, Karachi, Pakistaion (2000); Director of Awqaf for Tartous Governorate (1985-2002); Mufti of Tartous (1985-2002); Assistant Minister of Awqaf (2002 until current position); married with three sons.

¶12. (C) Comment: Many have been expecting a full cabinet shuffle since the inauguration of President Asad in July, so this action will be a disappointment to reform minded politicos.

CORBIN